A

DIALOGUE

Between the

Gallows and a *Freethinker*.

The THIRD EDITION: With an additional Confutation of a late impious Pamphlet, intituled, *Heaven open to all Men*. Where the Inconsistencies of that anonymous Author are concisely exposed to the most obvious View.

By *S. B.*

Parietes Medius fidius, si loqui possent Hæc dicerent.

CICERO.

LONDON:
Printed and Sold by the Booksellers of *London* and *Westminster*. MDCCL.
[Price One Shilling.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE PREFACE.

FIGURATIVE Writing and Locution have been us'd from the earliest Times by the wisest Men. The Ancients, particularly of the East, from whence other Parts of the World derive their Learning, used to express the most serious Truths in Parables and Mythologies; introducing not only irrational Animals, but even inanimate Beings as Interlocutors; and this oftentimes to denote the Evidence of what they advanc'd; to make the Sense sink deeper in the Minds of Men; and to signify, that what they declar'd was the very Voice of Nature. I have read somewhere or other in the Turkish History, *I think it is in the Life of* Mahomet *the Great, That as he was marching with his Army by the Side of a demolish'd Castle,* Two Owls *were hooting at one another from some of the broken Walls: At which one of the Emperor's Familiars said, Those Owls are talking to one another, and he would*

go hear what they said. He stood seemingly listening for some Time: When he returned, the Emperor ask'd what the Owls were talking of? He answer'd, They were telling one another, what a brave Emperor Mahomet *was, to destroy so many Towns and Castles, that they might have their Ruins to build their Nests, and catch Mice in.* * *The Emperor took the Hint, and made War for the future with less Barbarity. If this wise Man could introduce such despicable Animals, to make so mighty an Emperor sensible of his Cruelty; with much more Reason may the Author introduce the Gallows for an Interlocutor, from whence so many Libertines breathe their last; and which is so naturally capable of giving them the most feeling Evidence of their grand Mistake, both in their Principles and Practice. All their Outcries of Priestcraft and Imposture can't deafen the Voice of Nature; which impeaches their horrid System. A System, that saps the very Foundation of all Reason and Argumentation, as well as Religion; and tends to subvert the noble Structure of Morality, which is founded in the very Being of a rational Creature. The whole Creation demonstrates the Care of an All-seeing Providence over every thing that passes in*

* The celebrated *Cervantes*, Author of Don *Quixot*, has a Moral Dialogue between two Dogs: And the Author of *Don Quivedo*'s Visions, if I mistake no', has a Dialogue between a Dog and a *Fever*.

in his Government: That as he has created us with infinite Wisdom and Knowledge, so the same infinite Wisdom can never abandon the most noble Part of his Works, i. e. *The free Actions of Men, to Hap-hazard, without taking Cognizance of every thing they do, approving or disapproving their Actions, as they are agreeable to, or deviate from the All-just Rules of his infinite Perfections, 'Tis indubitable that the System of Freethinking, as understood by our modern Infidels, tends to the Destruction of the noblest Part of the Universe* †; *as is evidently shewn in this little Tract. Nor is it possible to imagine, unless where the Mind is clouded with Vice and Passions, that the Abominations, Injustices, and barbarous Cruelties Men are guilty of with respect to one another, can ever be agreeable to the Notions of an All-just Deity: If so, such Actions must be heinous in his Sight. The Consequences of which must be most terrible to any thinking Man. 'Tis evident at the same Time, that Freethinking makes a Jest of all this; tends of itself to destroy the eternal Boundaries of Good and Evil; puts the justest Men, and the greatest Villains on the same Footing; gives a Loose to all manner of Crimes and Impieties; teaches People to commit the greatest Enormities without Scruple; and in short, leaves every Man at liberty to cut*

†By the Universe, he means this lower World.

cut his Neighbour's Throat, if he can but have the Addresſ to eſcape the Gallows: But this being directly contrary to the Voice of Nature, and all the Notions of right Reaſon both in God and Man, the whole Poſſe *of Nature ſhould be arm'd againſt them. A great many of them, without doubt, do frequently fall into the Hands of publick Juſtice, and will do more and more, as this free-acting Syſtem encreaſes; but the greateſt Danger is from thoſe who are above it. They make their Brags of it; and I have heard it advanc'd in publick Company, that the greateſt Men in Church and State are of their Sect. Tho' this impudent Aſſertion is what all good Men ought to have a Horror of, and is even Criminal to imagine, without ſtronger Grounds than what Perſons profeſſedly of no Principles advance, to magnify their own Cauſe and debauch others; yet 'tis to be fear'd there is a culpable Connivance ſomewhere or other; elſe a Sect ſo deſtructive to our Lives and Fortunes, could never make ſuch Progreſs as it does daily: And 'tis to be hoped, our prudent Legiſlature will, in time, put a Mark on Men, who make it no more Sin in itſelf to commit the greateſt Crimes, than to kill a Fly; as well as conſider the Juſtice of their Diſtinction, between what is* ſinful *and what is* lawful, *when they quibble, and ſay a Thing is unlawful, that is, againſt the Laws of the Land; but not ſinful, becauſe all moral Evil,*

or

or Sin, is a Jest. Are there not Multitudes now in this Nation, who speak this Language? Is not Infidelity a reigning Sect among us? Whence did it spring, but from Freethinking? Such horrid Principles seem to fall under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate, as well as of the Divine: Wherefore I shall only add, that when one comes to the Close of an Argument with these Gentlemen, to shew the Unreasonableness of their System; and that there must be, for Example, eternal and essential Differences between Good and Evil; that there must be essential Truths, and undoubted Principles in the Agenda *and* Duties *of Life: That the Dictates of right Reason are as necessary and unchangeable in* Morals, *as in Science and Knowledge, the Conduct of our Lives being the most Noble and Useful Branch of it: They will tell you with an Assurance peculiar to them, that right Reason itself is but a Jest; or a meer Notion at the best,* i. e. *they are Scepticks in Reason as well as Religion; which is one of the most shameful Concessions a rational Creature can be reduced to; since Scepticism is a Blot on human Nature, and leaves us as much in the Dark in our noblest Operations, as Brute Beasts. This in reality seems to be the right Notion of Freethinking, as understood by our modern Libertines, that is, a Liberty of denying, or at least doubting of the very first Principles of Reason and Nature; so*

the Man drops of course. Lastly, whose-ever Hands this little Tract shall fall into, the Author would have them believe that it was design'd out of meer Kindness to his own Species; that if our modern Infidels are harden'd, or, as they express it, easy *in their Impieties, and blind to the Consequences of a System so destructive to Human Nature; others would open their Eyes, and see what Misfortunes such free Thoughts tend to bring upon us, both in Church and State. There is no need of saying any more, why an inanimate Being, such as the* Gallows, *is introduced speaking like a rational Creature: The wisest Men in all Antiquity having introduced such Interlocutors. The Corruption of the World, the reigning Crimes of all manner of Frauds, Cheats, Treachery, Perjury,* &c. *are so great, that thousands and thousands would make no Conscience to commit them, if it were not for their Necks: They are the natural Produce of modern Infidelity. By Consequence, all the World is obliged to detest it, and avoid it.*

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Gallows *and a* Freethinker.

GALLOWS.

HOW now, Sir! What, do you paſs by your Friends thus, without pulling off your Hat? Methinks you and I ſhould be better acquainted: I am ſure there has been a very intimate Union between myſelf and ſome of your dear Friends; nay, ſeveral of them have ſtuck to me to their laſt Breath.

Freethinker. Hah! the Gallows ſpeak! and ſo much to the Purpoſe too! I am afraid this is a Miracle in earneſt: No, d--mn it, that can't be; there is no ſuch Thing as a Miracle in Nature; we don't know the Extent of Nature, nor the Force of occult Cauſes, therefore no Miracle. But it is ſurpriſing, and, I fear, ominous too.

Gal. How ominous, my dear Friend! it only portends that you are in a fair Way for

making your *Exit* with ſo many of your Profeſſion, who die in my Embraces every Seſſions. But prithee, *Freethinker*, what makes thee ſo averſe to Miracles?

Fr. Hah! again; it ſpeaks and hears too! this is prodigious! Well, I will ſpeak to it, for I am ſure there is no Miracle in the Caſe: Some Trick of Prieſtcraft perhaps, ſome *Hocus Pocus*] Juggle or other; no, that can't be, here is no Room for Juggle; the Coaſt is clear; I ſee nothing but three inanimate Poſts, yet they ſpeak to me: Lord! how my Heart miſgives me! a Plague on this guilty Conſcience of mine! I thought I had ſtifled it long enough ago, but it always ſtares me in the Face when I could wiſh it fartheſt off. Well, but 'tis all Notion ſtill, a mere Bugbear of the Nurſe to fright Children. Now I will ſpeak to it. In the Name of Wonder, what art? a Body, or a Spirit? an animate Being, or an inanimate one? or do I dream, or rave? or is it that ſome d-mn'd Prieſt has hid himſelf under Ground, and ſpeaks to me thus, to ſcare me into ſome Religion? Come, tell me what thou art.

Gal. What am I? why, your beſt Friend, the three-legg'd Mare, who keeps you and all thoſe of your Profeſſion within ſome Bounds of Decency and Duty. But, I may be a good or an evil Spirit, an animate Being or inanimate one, or the Devil himſelf, for all that

that Argument of yours; nay, you don't know but you may be in a Dream, or rave all the while; or, which is worſe, it may be a Miracle, or not a Miracle, by your Way of Reaſoning: You ſay, you don't know the Extent of Nature, therefore I may ſpeak naturally to you by ſome hidden Cauſe or other; by the ſame Way of arguing it may be a Miracle, for not knowing the Extent of Nature, my ſpeaking to you may be *ſupernatural*, therefore a Miracle; ſo prithee now be adviſed, and don't pretend to bring Reaſons for your impious Syſtem, for all Nature will be againſt you. But I would fain come to a better Underſtanding with you, and all the whole Tribe of Atheiſts, Deiſts, Freethinkers, or whatever Denomination you go by: You don't reflect how much your whole *Clan* is obliged to me.

Fr. A better Underſtanding! obliged to the Gallows! what can be the Meaning of all this? We acknowledge no Obligations in Nature, but what make for our Intereſt.

Gal. Come, come, confeſs, and be free with me; many a Freethinker has made a more ſincere Confeſſion from this Place, than ever he did in his Life before. I tell you, all the whole Clan of Freethinkers owe the greateſt Obligations to the three-legg'd Mare of any Thing in the World; and ſince you are in ſo fair a Way to it, 'tis fit I ſhould examine you a little before-hand. Let me

aſk you a civil Queſtion or two: What think you of Hell and Damnation?

Fr. Why, 'tis a Scare-crow, to fright Children.

Gal. What is your Notion of Religion?

Fr. 'Tis an Engine of Prieſtcraft; it may be a good Cloak to gain our Ends on ſome Occaſions, and be ſerviceable ſometimes in Politicks. But we hate all internal Religion, particularly the Chriſtian, becauſe it gives a Check to our Liberties, for which Reaſon we endeavour to make a Jeſt of it as much as we can.

Gal. You believe in God, I hope?

Fr. Not if we could help it; but as we have an Averſion to Argument and Demonſtration, we acknowledge him in Words, but think as little of him as we can. Above all, we uſe our ſtrongeſt Efforts to perſuade ourſelves and Followers, that he never troubles himſelf with what we do.

Gal. I can't ſay but you have ſome Reaſon, according to your Way of thinking; for if he ſhould examine your *free Actions*, according to the Rules of his infinite Juſtice and Sanctity, your are in a poor Way. I ſuppoſe alſo, you acknowledge no moral Good or Evil in any of your Actions?

Fr. No, ſurely; that would make us uneaſy in our Enormities.

Gal. Nor no Sin in Nature?

Fr. No.

Gal.

Gal. You believe then, that all the grievous Crimes which the World called heretofore *Sins*, as Murders, Adulteries, Treasons, Extortions, Cheating, Robbing, Plundering, *&c.* are no Sins, nor require any Punishment in the next Life?

Fr. To be sure; we should cut on ourselves else; because if any of our Actions were evil, or liable to be punished by God, even the most heinous, the same Rule would hold for all the rest more or less, which would oblige us to the Rules of Religion and Morality, and give us Qualms of Conscience like other People: Whereas we endeavour to live without any Scruple, indulging our Inclinations in every thing to run out the Span of Life as swimmingly as we can.

Gal. You make nothing then unlawful in itself?

Fr. Hold a little; you may bring me into your Noose by-and-by: This requires a Distinction: We don't believe any thing to be a Sin in itself, as the Christians take the Word; but we believe a great many Things *unlawful.* Every thing that is against the Laws of the Land is unlawful, and we should deserve to be punished according to the Laws if we don't keep within Bounds. But to say it is a Sin, or a moral Evil, is a mere Jest.

Gal.

Gal. A very pretty Diſtinction indeed, and worthy your *free Syſtem!* However, you'll allow that High-treaſon, for Example, Killing the King (which God forbid!) Subverting the Government, and the like, are unlawful Actions.

Fr. None are more zealous for the preſent Government than ourſelves.

Gal. Nor greater Enemies in the main to any Government in the World, and would be ſo in fact, if you thought it againſt your dear Intereſt. But would it not be a Sin in itſelf, that is, a real internal Guilt on the Mind, to conſpire againſt his moſt ſacred Majeſty, and ſubvert the beſt Conſtitution in the World?

Fr. Humph! this is an enſnaring Queſtion, to which I'll give you no other Anſwer, than that we look on all Notions of Conſcience in your Senſe as mere Bigotry and Prejudice of Education. What need of deſcending to ſuch odious Particulars? in general, we laugh at all Notions of Good and Evil, and never trouble ourſelves about Guilt of Conſcience.

Gal. I underſtand you; but let me interrogate you a little further, to ſee better into this Diſtinction of *unlawful* and *ſinful*. Suppoſe you could bring about thoſe horrid Crimes I mention'd, with Succeſs and Impunity, would you have any Remorſe or Scruple in

in breaking the fundamental Laws of all Nations? Anſwer me directly.

Fr. I tell you in ſhort, Remorſe of Conſcience is a mere Bugbear of Prieſtcraft; tho' Succeſs and Impunity are glorious Things, and cancel all Blemiſhes.

Gal. Come hither, my dear Friend, and prepare thyſelf for my Embraces, for thou art in the direct Road to die in my Arms. Neither do I believe any prudent Legiſlature will ſuffer you to be depriv'd of your deſerved End.

Fr. Why ſo, pray now? no Men in the World profeſs a greater Reſpect for external Laws than we do; and are not the Laws ſufficient to keep People in their Duty?

Gal. Not in all Things; as your private Practice are a ſufficient Proof, which we will examine more particularly by-and-by. But prithee now why do you make ſuch a pother about external Laws?

Fr. Becauſe if we ſhould break in upon the Laws, we ſhould be brought to Puniſhment, and incur the Penalties annexed to them.

Gal. That is to ſay, you would be hang'd, if you ſhould put your Principles in Practice; not that you have any Scruple to break all Laws, internal or external, divine or human; is not that the *Engliſh* on't?

Fr. You are not much wide of the Mark; tho' we don't let the Vulgar know of it.

Gal.

Gal. O hoh! Friend, have I caught you! did not I tell you the three-legg'd Mare was the beſt Friend you had in the World? 'Tis this alone keeps you within the Bounds of Decency, and even common Humanity. This makes the Sum of your Belief. The Gallows is the prime Director of all your Actions. Now we ſhall come to a better Underſtanding. Why don't you break in upon all external Laws as well as internal ones? Not for any real Reſpect you have for them in the main, but only for fear of being hang'd. Why don't you ſtab, ſhoot, or poiſon any one that ſtands in your way? Is it not merely out of Reſpect to the Gallows?

Fr. Why really, I can't deny but the Gallows has a very particular Influence to keep People in their Duty. That, and Want of Power, hinder us from doing a great many Things, we ſhould make no Scruple of otherwiſe. *But, little Villains muſt ſubmit to Fate. Machiavel*, our great Law-giver and Founder, tells us there's no more Harm in murdering a Competitor, ſhoving an old Father into his Grave a Year or two before his Time, or ſtrangling a young Heir who keeps us out of an Eſtate, than killing a Fly: But the vaſt Reſpect we have for your Worſhip keeps us at a Diſtance.

Gal. I thought this was at the Bottom on't: That vaſt Reſpect you pretend to ſhew for the Laws, is in effect directed to me: 'Tis an ingenuous

genuous Confeſſion: Oh! I have a particular Knack in making People ſpeak Truth. Many ſuch Confeſſions have been made at this Place before now: I ſuppoſe the ſame Reaſon keeps you from deſtroying all, Root and Branch, that ſtands in your way.

Fr. The very ſame; nothing but the Gallows preſerves us from theſe Enormities; for the *vere Adepti*, who are out of your Reach, commit them without Scruple. 'Tis true, we have ſome other collateral Motives you ſhall hear preſently; we affect alſo an external Decency in ſome of our Actions; nay, would make the Vulgar believe we are moral Men, and can even put on the ſanctified Cloak of Religion, to gain our Ends, or keep up our Reputation. But our great Regulator is the Pendulum that hangs from your Croſs-arms: This is the real Cauſe that keeps us within Bounds.

Gal. The Freedom of this Confeſſion emboldens me to tell you as freely, that *interiourly* a Freethinker is the greateſt Villain upon Earth, ſince he has no *interiour* Scruple of the greateſt Villainies, the moſt flagrant Enormities, the moſt horrid Wickedneſs, the moſt inceſtuous and beaſtly Abominations in the World.

Fr. Hold a little; you expreſs yourſelf ſomething too harſhly, as well as run on a wrong Suppoſition. We deny that we are guilty of any interiour Wickedneſs, becauſe

we don't believe any thing to be *interiourly* evil. We ſay, there is no ſuch Thing as interiour Religion, no internal Duties, no internal Obligations, no Laws of Morality, and the like, but only a due Reſpect to external Laws, which you unhappily reduce to the Fear of our Necks: So that if we ſhould commit the moſt horrid Impieties, provided we eſcape thoſe ſame Laws, we ſhould be neither better nor worſe interiourly. In this Point we are entirely eaſy; for, as I ſaid, if we allow any one Action to be a Sin interiourly, we muſt allow ſome internal Rules, by which human Actions are to be regulated. This would oblige us to the Laws of Morality, and render all our Actions good or evil, more or leſs, as they are agreeable to, or deviate from thoſe Rules; which won't ſquare with that uncontroulable Liberty we profeſs in all we do, without the leaſt Check or Scruple of Conſcience whatſoever, having a due Regard ſtill to your Worſhip and our own Necks. Beſides, tho' we won't allow thoſe Enormities you mention'd to be any Sins, we abſtain from capital Crimes, and can conform to any external Acts of Religion as well as other Men; ſo that you would do us a great deal of Wrong to poſt us up for Villains in the Eyes of the World, whom we would deceive as decently as we could.

Gal.

Gal. Wrong, my dear Friend! that's a Jeſt in your Principles; no Man can do you any Wrong, ſince according to the Gentlemen of your Profeſſion, Right and Wrong are nothing but mere Notions of Education, unleſs you call that Wrong that is done to yourſelves, and every thing Right you do to others: I fancy that's the Caſe. Suppoſe, for Example, one of your moſt intimate Friends, with whom you have enter'd into the ſtricteſt Obligations and mutual Engagements, ſhould decently ſacrifice you to his own Ends, or ſhould rip up your Bowels for his Diverſion, as *Domitian* did Flies; would that Man do you any Wrong?

Fr. Humph! This is another enſnaring Queſtion: He would break in upon all the Laws of common Humanity.

Gal. Laws of Humanity! That's a Jeſt too, according to your Rules: Laws of Humanity are nothing but the Laws of Morality, or the Duties of natural Religion; and I am ſure you laugh at all internal Religion.

Fr. That's true; but we are Men of Honour, we value our Word, we ſtand much upon our Reputation, and we are punctual to our Engagements, and mutual Promiſes to one another; and he would be a brutal Villain to betray his Truſt.

Gal. Ha, ha, ha! you make me laugh as well as ſpeak: Can any one in his Senſes be-

lieve, that a Person who makes no scruple of the most horrid Impieties, will boggle at his Honour, or breaking his Word, when it suits his Interest. This is one of the greatest Jests of all. 'Tis true, to pass on the World for a Man of Honour may be a serviceable Cloak, as well as Religion; but I am sure a Freethinker would boggle no more at breaking his Word and Honour, than breaking the Commandments, if it were not for the Sake of his Reputation; for, prythee, what do'st mean by the Obligations of Honour and mutual Engagements? No Sin, I hope, nor any thing that's binding interiourly!

Fr. No, hang it, that's against our System too: I tell you we allow no Obligations in Nature.

Gal. Why then do you put such a notorious Cheat upon the World, to make People believe you stand upon your Honour, when you grant that to be as much a Jest in itself as Religion? I am sure that Man would be a stark Fool, who should trust his Life and Fortune to your Honour, when you laugh at the very fundamental Laws of Nature, from whence all mutual Promises and Engagements draw their Obligation. Come, I am a great Dealer in Cases; you know my Office chiefly turns on extraordinary Cases: I'll put the Case once more, and then we will turn to something else. Suppose a Band of Highwaymen, of your Principles, had made the most solemn En-

Engagement among themſelves, to carry off an immenſe Sum, to be equally divided among the Adventurers; whether any Murders or other Crimes were neceſſary to effect it, comes much to the ſame; the Fact being done, one of them has the lucky Addreſs not only to cheat, but to hang all the reſt; would that Man commit a greater Crime by breaking his Engagements with his Companions, than committing the Fact?

Fr. Pooh! this is carrying the Thing too high; I hope you don't put Men of Honour and a Gang of Highwaymen on the ſame Footing? We Freethinkers are generally Men of Rank and Figure, who value their Honour above their Life, and would cut any Man's Throat who ſhould call it in Queſtion.

Gal. You make me laugh again: Why, does a Freethinker of any Rank, look upon it to be any more Harm in itſelf, to commit the greateſt Crimes, than the greateſt Villain upon Earth? Well, put the Caſe a Company of *Freethinkers*, of the firſt Rank and Quality, conſpired together to ſubvert the Government, which in your Principles is no more Harm in itſelf, than to blow up an oppoſite Party, entering into the moſt ſolemn Engagements of their Word and Honour, to ſtand by one another, and divide the Spoils according to Agreement; one of them betrays

his

his Truſt, and either impeaches or ſupplants all the reſt.

Fr. He would be a damn'd worthleſs Villain for his Pains.

Gal. Why ſo? would he commit any Sin?

Fr. No.

Gal. Would he do any Wrong?

Fr. Not in itſelf; but he would deſerve to be ſtigmatiſed for an eternal Dog.

Gal. Stigmatiſed! for doing a Thing that is no more Harm in itſelf than killing a Fly! Is it a greater Fault to betray his Truſt than to kill an innocent Man? Come, come, I am ſure you would think yourſelf injured in that Caſe: And why injured? but becauſe the Light of Nature tells you that it is againſt the very Notion of a rational Being to be guilty of ſuch Enormities, when it happens to be againſt yourſelf: In ſhort, a Freethinker muſt be a Fool by Principle, as well as ſomething elſe, if he expects any other Treatment.

Fr. In ſhort too, we never trouble ourſelves about the Reaſon of the Thing, and Deduction of *Conſequences*; we content ourſelves with our free Thoughts and free Actions; if you come to ſift us thus by the Rules of Reaſon, we have done with you; ſo fare you well.

Gal.

Gal. I command you by my three-legg'd Authority to ſtay a little: You have almoſt made me change my Syſtem.

Fr. Hah! that indeed is an Inducement to make me ſtay; for we would fain overthrow all Syſtems in the World: But what is the Change my Reaſons have produced in you?

Gal. I thought the three-legg'd Mare had been the only Thing you ought to ſtand in Awe of; but according to your Way of Thinking, you ought to be afraid of every Man you ſee.

Fr. Why ſo?

Gal. Becauſe when the World comes to be thoroughly appriſed of your Principles, inſtead of taking you to be Men of Honour, they will look on you as ſo many wild Beaſts; nay, worſe than wild Beaſts, becauſe theſe ſpare their own Species, whereas you ſtick at no Crime, and would deſtroy all who ſtand in your Way, provided you could do it with Safety of your Necks.

Fr. You ſpeak very often of our Principles, whereas we have none; we hate all Principles, eſpecially thoſe you call firſt Principles: No; our Buſineſs is to kick out all Principles. How many times muſt I tell you, they are only Prejudices of Education, begun by the *Nurſe*, and continued by the *Prieſt*? Inſtead of going againſt Nature, we allow Nature the juſt Liberty to do and think what it pleaſes.

Gal.

Gal. That is, to cut one another's Throats, if they think proper; for this very Reason I think you ſhould be afraid of every Man you meet, for either the Men you converſe with are Perſons who have ſome Senſe of Religion, or Men of your own Kidney. I hope you will allow that Expreſſion, if you boggle at the Name of *Principles*. All Men of religious Principles ought to look upon you as ſo many Monſters, who make no Scruple of deſtroying your own Species, Root and Branch, if they ſtood in your Way; that, as I ſaid, the wildeſt Beaſt let looſe would not be ſo hurtful to human Nature. I wonder you are not afraid of being purſued by Hue and Cry, and knock'd on the Head, as they do mad Dogs. I am ſure all civil Magiſtrates, if you were once diſcover'd, ought to ſhut you up as they would a Madman, who ſhould run through the Streets with a naked Sword in his Hand, threatening to kill every Man he meets. Your Notions are as much a Phrenzy in Morals, and the Conſequences much worſe, for you make it no Crime to kill Body and Soul. On the other hand; if the Perſons you have Dealings with be Men of no Principles, like yourſelf, how dare you to truſt your Life and Fortune with thoſe who think it no more Harm to deſtroy ye, to ſacrifice ye to their Intereſt, than to remove a Log out of his Way? Nay, would be a Fool in that Syſtem

if

if any Tenderneſs of Nature ſhould perſuade him to the contrary.

Fr. Pox on it, you are running on with your *Conſequences* and *Inferences* again; whereas we never trouble ourſelves with any other *Conſequences* but thoſe that touch our Copyhold.

Gal. No, I know you don't: But does not ſuch a horrid Syſtem touch every one's Copyhold in the World, and tend to the Deſtruction of every Individual? Does not any Man of Senſe ſee the Evidence of theſe *Inferences*, if ſuch *free Thoughts* ſhould once come to obtain? and ought to guard againſt them, as they tender their Lives, Liberties and Properties, as well as Religion. If you require it, I'll give you a Demonſtration of the Juſtice of theſe Inferences, if the Violence of your Paſſions and depraved Appetites, did not make you blind and deaf to the Light and Voice of Nature. Thoſe are Prejudices with a witneſs.

Fr. Away with all Demonſtration and Light of Nature; 'tis that has brought the confounded Ties of Religion and Conſcience upon us. But we hope to out it all in Time, if we can get but Power enough to throw off the Maſque.

Gal. Now you ſpeak like yourſelf: I know what you aim at very well: You have Maſques, and Blinds, and Cloaks, to impoſe on the World beyond all the Juggles of *Prieſtcraft*.

But don't be in a Paſſion; I will ſhew you as clear as the Sun, by an Argument even a *Freethinker* may underſtand, that the Tendency of your free Syſtem ſtrikes at the Vitals of human Nature, ſaps the Foundation of all Liberty and Property, all Security of Life, Truſt, Fidelity between Man and Man; gives an Inlet to all manner of Villainies, ſets Mankind a worrying one another like wild Beaſts, and by conſequence muſt be the moſt horrid Syſtem the Devil himſelf could ever wiſh to have propagated on Earth: Do you acknowledge theſe Conſequences of your free Thoughts or not?

Fr. Piſh, no; we ſhould be knock'd on the Head in earneſt if we did: But I tell you we never trouble our Heads about *Conſequences.*

Gal. Then the Property of a *Freethinker* is to ſhut his Eyes to the moſt glaring Truths, and only direct his Thoughts to thoſe Things of which all rational Men ought to have the greateſt Horror. But let me beg you to keep your Temper a little: Thinking of theſe *Conſequences* now may ſave you the Trouble of ſhooting or ſtabbing yourſelf, or taking a Doſe of Opium, to keep off ſuch Thoughts, when they ſtare you in the Face at the Approach of Death: For that's the *Freethinker's* Way to eaſe his Conſcience. I tell you once more, I have a particular Knack in making People ſee more *Conſequences* of their free

Thoughts in one Minute, than ever they would acknowledge all their Lives. Come, let me try if I can bring a *Freethinker* to a juſt Way of Reaſoning or not: 'Tis better to be hamper'd in a Logical Nooſe, than in a Hempen one, which is often the Fate of thoſe of your Sect. Pray tell me, what is the End and Intent of this free Syſtem of your's? Is it only for the Liberty of *Thinking* and *Believing* what you pleaſe, and what not; or is it chiefly to give yourſelves a looſe to *Act* and *Do* what you pleaſe?

Fr. Both. We perſuade People to think and believe what they will of Religion and Morality, that we may freely do and act what we pleaſe without Scruple or Remorſe.

Gal. Very well; you imagine then every Man has a juſt Liberty of believing or diſbelieving interiourly, nay not believing any thing at all of Religion and Morality, if he thinks proper; and acting by that Belief?

Fr. Undoubtedly; for who has any Power to reſtrain my Thoughts? But if I believe no Religion at all interiourly, I am a Fool if I obſerve any in my Actions, unleſs it be for my own Intereſt, or to ſave my Bacon; nay, 'tis for this *Liberty* of *free Acting*, that we eſtabliſh the *Liberty* of *free Thinking*.

Gal. I am ſure he would be a Fool that ſhould think you would, or truſted his Life in a *Freethinker*'s Hands. By Religion I

ſuppoſe you mean as before, all Obligations of Conſcience both natural and reveal'd.

Fr. Yes: I told you we are not ſo unthinking as not to ſee, if any thing a Man can do be evil, we ſhould be obliged to the Laws of Morality.

Gal. But does not this deſtroy all Security of Life between Man and Man? Would not a Freethinker be a Fool, that ſhould ſpare his own Father, or the deareſt Friend he has in the World, ſuppoſe it were his Intereſt to take him off? Would not all Tenderneſs and Ties of Blood, according to his Principles, be mere *Prejudices* of *Education?* Can the wildeſt Beaſt be ſo great an Enemy to Man, as one Man would be to another, if this Syſtem ſhould prevail? Had I not Reaſon to ſay that all rational Creatures ought to guard againſt a *Freethinker*, as they would againſt the greateſt Monſter in Nature? How dare you truſt your Life in any Man's Power, who ſhould be poſſeſs'd of theſe unnatural Principles?

Fr. Pooh! you are always harping on this jarring String; muſt I tell you once more that there are Laws and Puniſhment annexed to them, to keep Men within the common Bounds of Society. What need of internal Principles, when external Laws are ſufficient?

Gal. How ſufficient! Pray, Sir, are there not ten thouſand Crimes, which may be committed

mitted with Impunity, if there were no other Check to the Wickedneſs of Men but external Laws? What could not *Men in Power* do? Conſider it well: What could not cunning and deſigning Men do, if they had nothing to take care of but their Necks? What Man could be ſecure of his Throat one Hour, if thoſe he converſes with would cut it if they could? Come, be free, and tell me; Are there not a great many Enormities which you *Freethinkers* commit without any Scruple, for which the Laws would make you ſmart, if they were diſcover'd.

Fr. That's our Buſineſs; if we are diſcover'd we are puniſh'd; that's all we care for.

Gal. Yes, and very often my Buſineſs too; but let that paſs: I hope you are ſenſible by this Time of the Truth of the *Conſequences*, every Man of Senſe may alledge againſt you.

Fr. What?

Gal. That the Syſtem of *Freethinking* tends to the Deſtruction of all human Society, and even Liberty and Property, as well as of Religion.

Fr. Pſhaw! as to that, every Man is born in a State of War, and has juſt as much Right as he has Power: What he can't do with Safety, he is a Fool to meddle with, unleſs a deſperate Puſh may be neceſſary for him: What he has Power to do, he is a Fool if he refrains:

frains: But as to the *Juſt*, the *Right* or the *Wrong*, we are entirely eaſy. 'Tis true, where People have a Notion of ſome Religion, and believe any thing to be good or evil in itſelf, I can't ſay but your *Conſequences* look naturally enough, and you would do well to guard againſt us; for we ſhould certainly make uſe of our Right; that is, our Power to do what we had a mind to, in which we have a great Advantage over Men of Principles and Conſcience. But if the World were of our Opinion, we ſhould have no Scruples of Conſcience to hamper our Minds, and check noble Deſigns: We ſhould rely entirely on external Laws; every Man might do what he pleaſed, provided he had them in his Eye: There would be no ſuch thing as the Bugbears of Good and Evil, Right or Wrong; we ſhould ſpare no Body, and expect no Body to ſpare us: If I would cut any Man's Throat that ſtood in my way, I know he would cut mine, ſo we ſhould be on an equal Footing. This we call living according to Nature; we ſhould be forced indeed to make ſome mutual Engagements for our own Eaſe, but then we know that every one would break them without Scruple, if he could do it with Safety. Now I have told you the naked Truth.

Gal, A very pretty Society this, truly: I ſuppoſe you would want a Caſt of my Office very

very frequently; or, perhaps would ſpare me the Pains, by cutting one another's Throats as faſt as you can. Certainly, you Freethinkers muſt be the moſt couragious Men in the World, to be able to ſleep when any one of the ſame Profeſſion is in the Houſe with ye. May be every Man would build himſelf a Caſtle, or rather a Cave, in ſome inacceſſible Rock, to ſecure himſelf againſt his Brother Savages: But then, what would you do by your Wives, Children, or Slaves, if you ſhould be uneaſy to them? For I preſume you would breed them up with no Principles, like your ſelves: So that you would be as much in Danger from them, as from other People. But I hope you don't think of propagating this Freethinking Society here in *England*; but only calculate it for the *Hottentots*, or ſome of the new found *Savages?*

Fr. You don't know but it may come to that at laſt: Our Syſtem of no Religion makes greater Progreſs than you may imagine, tho' we don't let People into thoſe confounded Conſequences you draw from it. I can aſſure you we gain Ground every Day: We have our *Adepti* in Church and State, who know how to make Proſelytes as well as the moſt Politick Prieſts in the World; in every Country, Kingdom and State in the Univerſe: Nay, in every Sect, in every Religious Profeſſion, for all their pretended Sanctity, we have Men who believe no more

more Internal Religion than ourſelves: But I muſt confeſs, *England* ſeems to be the propereſt Soil for New Sects of any Place in the World, unleſs you will except our emulous Traders over the Water.

Gal. That's poſſible enough: There were wicked Men and ſanctified Villains from the Beginning; from the old *Bacchanalians* down to our *Hellfire Clubs*. Oh! they were all great Freethinkers. But now you talk of Proſelytes, prithee now by what Arguments, or Arts, do you draw People into this Freethinking Sect, that is, to ſhut their Eyes to the Light of Nature, and commit the greateſt Villainies without Remorſe?

Fr. Why, by their own natural Paſſions and Inclinations; we endeavour to corrupt their Morals in the firſt place, giving a Looſe to all manner of Lewdneſs and Debauchery, in which the Bent of our Youth of late Years ſeconds us beyond our Wiſh: Tho' we profeſs publickly the juſt Liberty of Freethinking, that is, believing any thing or nothing of Religion, yet we do what we can to keep them from Thinking at all, till they are fleſh'd and blooded: If they begin to grow qualmiſh, and boggle at the moſt horrid Impieties, we laugh at their Squeamiſhneſs, and make a Jeſt of all that is Sacred; we turn all Religions and Morality into Burleſque; we are perpetually filling their Ears with the

Juggles

Juggles of *Priestcraft* and *Imposture*; we rake up all we can of wicked Churchmen, and hypocritical Villains, who made a Cloak of Religion in all Ages; we draw Parallels between the Cheats of the Heathen Gods, the Impostures of *Mahomet*, *Bramins*, *Brachmans*, Enthusiasts of all Sects, and the True Church; and close all with this convincing Argument, *That Priests of all Religions are the same:* That one Verse has made more Proselytes than all the Arguments we can bring.

Gal. Tho' I grant you all those Impostors were great Freethinkers, or at least Free-actors, which comes much to the same, you don't think such Stuff as this comes up to a Demonstration, do ye?

Fr. No, hang it, we hate all Demonstration; but it goes down with unthinking Youth as glib as can be; especially when it is gilded over with the Incentives of Liberty. If People are Bookishly inclin'd, and have a smattering of Learning, for we never deal with thorough-pac'd Scholars, we throw in Doubts about the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, Providence, Punishments of the next Life, Inconsistencies of different Sects, and the like; making them believe, that Interest, Power and Pleasure are the main Hinges on which all human Actions turn; still closing all our Arguments, *That Religion is a Jest:* As old *Cato* did his Harangues,

 that

that *Carthage* was to be deſtroyed. What need I ſay any more? The Infinity of ſcandalous Libels and Lampoons againſt Religion, our Doctors publiſh from time to time; the barefac'd Impieties, as are daily advanced in the beſt of Companies; the Nullity of Religion in Practice, at leaſt, by the greateſt Part of Mankind; and the Numbers of thoſe who neither practiſe, nor believe any, evidently ſhew that our Sect is a growing Sect; and in proceſs of Time may make the greateſt Figure of all thoſe that people this Land.

Gal. You might add all thoſe that die by the Hands of the Common Hangman; for they are, generally ſpeaking, of your Clan: But, let me aſk you a further Queſtion or two: Firſt, Why are you ſo averſe to Religion? 2dly, Which of the Two you ſtrike at moſt; Natural *Religion*, or Reveal'd?

Fr. Tho' we don't care to give the Why and Wherefore of our Actions, you force me to ſpeak my Mind whether I will or no: I'll tell ye therefore, we hate *Religion*, becauſe it is a Curb to our free Actions. We chiefly impugn Reveal'd Religion in Shew, but the *real Stab* is aimed at Morality, and the Rules of a good Life. Becauſe, being reſolved to give our Appetites their full Swing, and Reveal'd *Religion* enforcing the Law of Nature in its greateſt Perfection, we would willingly make a Jeſt of both; but often make

make a *Blind* of one to deſtroy the other. Hence you ſee, That ſay what you will to a *Freethinker*, and bring all the Arguments in the World againſt him, he laughs at all you can ſay, and is perfectly eaſy and unconcerned in the midſt of all his Impieties. The modeſteſt Thing you will hear from him is, that God never troubles himſelf with what we poor Mortals do.

Gal. I ſhall ſpeak to this laſt preſently: Perhaps he may laugh at all Remonſtrances, as long as his Paſſions are in their full Carreer; but when theſe come to flag, and Death ſtares him in the Face, I can never think all is ſo eaſy *Within* as they would make us believe; otherwiſe, Why are they forc'd to put a Stop to all Remorſe by a Shot, or a Stab, or a Doſe of *Opium*; but becauſe they can't bear the Terror of their own Thoughts? I am ſure moſt of your Profeſſion, who take their laſt Leap from my Arms, have other Sentiments: They ſeem to be ſenſible of their Miſtake; acknowledge the Errors of their paſt Life, and often bewail their Misfortune in falling into ſuch wicked Company. I told you before, I had the Gift of making them ſpeak their real Thoughts: And not only that; but I can ſee into their very Souls at that critical Time, and find their Terror and Remorſe proportionable to the Wickedneſs of their Lives. But what is the Reaſon ſo many *Free-*

thinkers lay violent Hands on themſelves, when their Conſcience begins to prick them?

Fr. It is, That having ſtifled all Thoughts of the next Life, and work'd their Paſſions into a Belief that there is no ſuch Thing as Good and Evil, being abandon'd to a reprobate Senſe; they take that Method to eaſe their anxious Minds, by preventing the Terrors of Death by Death itſelf.

Gal. That is, they ſave the Hangman the Labour, in which there ſeems to be ſomething of Providence; that, as they had contemn'd all Laws Divine and Human, to gratify their brutal Paſſions, they ſhould be abandoned to the Effects of thoſe very Paſſions to be their own Executioners. For *Suicide* is ſo viſible a Judgment, and ſuch a Blot upon Nature, that the veryeſt Brutes are not capable of it. We ſee all other Creatures ſtruggling to the laſt Gaſp to ſave the Remainder of their Lives; nay, the moſt determin'd Atheiſt, who by his falſe Reaſonings had reſolv'd to kill himſelf, if we ſhould offer to ſtab him at unawares, would ſtand upon his Guard: So great is the Force of Nature. But, as you *Freethinkers* pretend to be rational Men, ſurely, ſince theſe monſtrous Notions won't take with every Body, you muſt gloſs them over with ſome ſpecious Shew of Reaſon or Argumentation.

Fr. Truly your three-legg'd Worſhip is very much out there: For, we endeavour to per-

perſuade People that Reaſon itſelf is but a mere Notion: We attack the very firſt Principles of Reaſon: And when we have brought People to doubt of every thing, in this tottering Condition we can ſoon ſhove them into the Gulph of Immorality. You don't conſider that the Drift of this free Syſtem is to lead Men by their Paſſions, not by their Reaſon.

Gal. So that, when a *Freethinker* makes a Jeſt of Religion, and ridicules all that is Sacred, he does not pretend to any Reaſon or Argumentation in the Caſe.

Fr. How ſhould he pretend to it? When our ultimate Anſwer to all Arguments is, That *Reaſon itſelf is but a Jeſt.*

Gal. Your Servant good Mr. *Statue!* Has not my three-legg'd Worſhip as much right to Reaſon and Argument, as the beſt Freethinker of you all? I am ſure, a Man who makes a Jeſt of Reaſon, has no more Right to be believed, than a walking Statue. But I fear ſuch Jeſts will bring you into real Evils. However, this Way of Thinking is much of a Piece: For whoever makes a Jeſt of Religion, muſt make a Jeſt of right Reaſon: The Principles of Religion, and the Principles of right Reaſon in *Morals*, are one and the ſame: Whoever denies one, muſt deny the other: No wonder a *Freethinker* acts like a Brute, ſince he reduces himſelf to the Condition of a Brute in making a Jeſt of his Reaſon.

Fr.

Fr. You are coming upon me with your *Consequences* again.

Gal. Consequences! Why, you bring them on yourself in spight of your Nose. What is a Being without the Use of Reason? Come, answer me directly: For I am privileged by the *Laws of the Land*, to make you confess.

Fr. A Being without the use of Reason is either a *Brute* or *Block*.

Gal. 'Tis possible you will prove yourself one or t'other by and by. Now I ask you what is the Use of Reason, I mean in the Direction of Life?

Fr. To follow one's Appetites, and indulge Nature in any thing it has a mind to.

Gal. There spoke the *Brute*, I am sure*. Well but, Do you allow of no other Use of Reason in the Directions of Men's Lives; no Rules to shew what is to be done, and what not?

Fr. Yes, to shew us what is hurtful to our Beings, that is, our Bodies, and what not.

Gal. The Voice of the *Brute* again. Come, I'll be kinder to you than you are to yourself,

* One of the brightest Genius's this Age has produced, gives this Character of a Freethinker. To argue with Freethinkers, is almost in a literal Sense, to fight with Beasts: *Dean Swift*. And in another Place, Ignorance and Vice are two necessary Ingredients in the Composition of Freethinkers, who, in Propriety of Speech, are no Thinkers at all. *Swift*'s Letter to a young Gentleman.

ſelf, ſince you are ſo humble as to put yourſelf on the *Par* with me, by making a Jeſt of Reaſon, and ſhew you another Uſe of Reaſon, if you have any; for you know 'tis expedient to doubt of every thing; I ſay another Uſe of Reaſon than merely to take Care of the Body: You have an Immortal Soul, Man, of infinite more Value than the Body; and by conſequence requires much more Care than the Body. Reaſon is the Guide of the Soul, as the Eye is of the Body. Tho' you have Legs and Strength to carry you which way you pleaſe, will you let them carry you down a Precipice, without making uſe of your Eyes to avoid it? Are there not Precipices and Dangers of the Soul, as well as of the Body, unleſs the Eye of the Soul tells you how to avoid them? And if it does tell you, Are not you a Madman to run into them? But ſtay; perhaps your Freethoughts have thought away your Soul as well as your Reaſon: You don't believe the Soul and Body to be one and the ſame, do ye?

Fr. We are entirely eaſy whether it be or not. We know we have Appetites, and thoſe we are reſolved to indulge, and leave the reſt to Chance.

Gal. Why that *be* or *not*? I fear we ſhall come to the *Brute* or the *Block* in earneſt. Who, that is a Degree above a Brute, can deny but that he has Thoughts as well as Appetites: Is there not a Being in Man endow'd with the

the noble Operations of Thinking, Judging, Chusing, Foreseeing, Willing, Reasoning, and the like, which are impossible to be squeez'd out of Matter: Spin it into the finest Fibres, actuate it with the most impetuous Motion, you'll never find out one Thought in all this: It will be mere Matter still. Wherefore the Soul and the Body are Beings essentially distinct from one another. What a rare Piece of Corruption the Body is, when the Soul is separated from it? I scarce think any rational Man can pretend to deny the Immortality of the Soul. If he did, it were easy to demonstrate, that since the Soul and Body are Beings essentially distinct from one another, the Destruction of the Body does not necessarily infer the Destruction of the Soul; unless, when you cut off a Man's Hand, you must cut off his Soul too. The principal Use of Reason therefore is to take Care of the Soul, not the Body. But if Men were to pursue their Appetites, in every thing these prompt them to, what a Pass would the World come to? There are Rules therefore to be observed in the Actions of the Mind, as well as of the Body, and a Miscarriage of much greater Consequence.

Fr. If our Appetites are irregular; he that gave them is responsible for them. If there should be any Harm in them, 'tis to ourselves, not to Him. Neither is it worth his while to regard them, or *punish* them; as is proved in

in a late Pamphlet intitled, *Heaven open to all Men.*

Gal. O Friend, are you thereabouts? Have you caught hold of that poor Twig to ſave you from ſinking? But do you call it *Proving*, what that impudent Pamphlet has jumbled together? Though it is wrote under the Maſk of a Chriſtian: you Freethinkers can turn yourſelves into all Shapes: 'Tis ſubmitted to the Authority of the Church too: I hope Freethinkers are not got in there; if they ſhould, then is the time to *beware of Prieſtcraft*; for the Gentlemen of your Clan can profeſs any Religion, and laugh at all: Perhaps the Author is ſome Turncoat Jeſuit in Maſquerade? if it ſhould, your *Legion* can outmaſk him: The Author pretends, it was tranſlated from another Language: To be ſure, it was never wrote in a *Chriſtian Language.*

Fr. No! Why he ſpeaks moſt magnificently of Man's *Redemption* by Chriſt.

Gal. Aye, and moſt fooliſhly, moſt ridiculouſly; and moſt notoriouſly cutting on himſelf in his way of Arguing: But I know where he had his impious Reveries. There was one *Monſieur Bayle*, a *French* Refugee, who ſpeaks like this Maſquerader, moſt magnificently of Revelation and the Scriptures; which, he ſays, he reveres, but maintains that he muſt believe Contradictions, at the ſame time, which in reality, is turning all into mere Bam. But pray, Sir, why

 can't

can't God punish the unnatural Crimes of Men which Way, how much, or how long he pleases! can any thing be too severe for such cruel, beastly Monsters, as are in Nature?

Fr. Because Men's Crimes can't hurt him; nor their good Actions profit him.

Gal. But can't they hurt one another?

Fr. Yes.

Gal. Is he not their supreme Lord and Governor? his not the Universe is Empire? is he not to take Care that they do *Good*, and avoid *Evil*? Can't Evil be punished, and Good rewarded? Can't God lay his Commands on his Subjects for *their Good*, if not for his own? Can't Men break those Commands? Can't they, don't they deserve to be punished for it?

Fr. Yes, yes, yes, what then?

Gal. Why then, this Author, and your Worship, cut on yourselves, when you say, that God can't punish Sin. Besides, it is notorious matter of Fact, that God both has, and will punish a wicked World: What are all the Miseries of this wretched Life, but Punishments for Sin? What are all Wars, Plagues, Famines, and Death itself, the most Terrible of all Terribles, and that in infinite Shapes, but terrible Punishments? Pray, how long has the World lasted?

Fr. I can't tell; some thousand Years at least.

Gal. How long will it last?

Fr. Perhaps some thousands more.

Gal. Will not those dreadful Evils or Punishments last too?

Fr. Very likely: But what of that?

Gal. Why it only demonstrates in fact, that God both can and does punish Sin; and that too for thousands and thousands of Years. Does God inflict these Miseries on Men for mere Sport, or is it not in his Power to prevent them? Come, answer me directly?

Fr. 'Tis impious to say he inflicts these Miseries on Men for his Recreation, and no less impious to imagine he can't prevent them; so let them pass for Punishments for Sin; since no other Reason can be given: nay, this ingenious Author maintains, that God will punish Sin, or the *Man of Sin* eternally, but not the Men, for they will all be saved, and Heaven is open to all Men.

Gal. That is ingenious truly; no Jesuit in the World could distinguish more nicely: God will punish Sin eternally, but not the Sinner. Most profoundly Logical! I presume he took the Hint from *Milton's Paradise Lost*, where *Sin* and *Death* are poetically dressed up as separate Beings, though poetical Fictions; so I find the Man means nothing but Phantoms and Scarecrows all the while: But let that pass for the present: However, you will grant that God hath, can, and does punish Sinners.

Fr. Why aye, in this Life, but not after Death.

Gal. He will punish Sin, won't he?

Fr. Yes.

Gal. Why then let the Sinner take Care of himself; for Sin and the Sinner can be no more separated after Death, than they can be in this Life; *i. e.* if Sin remains, the Sinner will remain too: But, prithee, Free-thinker, what Imputation of Cruelty, or Revenge can there be in punishing Sinners after Death, as well as before? Come, tell me I say, can there be any greater Imputation of Cruelty or Revenge in God, to punish Crimes after Death, any more than before?

Fr. Hum! Aye, no; why really I can't tell: may be not: But we would make the World believe, that there is, and that the Mysteries of Christianity are mere Nonsense: But I see you can find Reasons for all of them.

Gal. I can assure you the Mysteries of Christianity have the strongest Reasons in the World for the Belief of them, though they may be incomprehensible in themselves.

Fr. Incomprehensible! why, must any thing be incomprehensible to rational Creatures? 'tis unworthy of God to teach us any thing above our Reason.

Gal. There spoke human Pride, I am sure: But are there not the strongest Reasons in the World, to prove the Existence of God?

Fr. Confest.

Gal. But is there any Attribute in an infinite Being, which you can comprehend? or

is there any Being in Nature, you can comprehend, as to the primary Conſtituents. Yet they are all really in Nature.

Fr. You will be hampering me with Conſequences again: But though God can puniſh Sin both in this Life and the next; yet it is Cruelty to imagine he can puniſh us eternally.

Gal. Can you teach God what Puniſhment is due to infinite Juſtice for the Crimes of Men? Muſt Mortals preſcribe to God *how long*, and in what Meaſure he muſt puniſh Sin? Is this agreeable to the magnificent Notions you pretend to have of God? Is it not preſcribing to him, How he is to puniſh Sin? Are all the Crimes of Man puniſhed in this Life? Are not Numbers in the greateſt Miſery, and others in the greateſt Splendor of Life, till the laſt Gaſp? Is it rational to imagine, they will all be put on the ſame Footing? Will not a diſproportionable Compenſation after Death be a Puniſhment? But farther; are not all Puniſhments of a juſt God chiefly deſigned to be *Medicinal*? for *preventing* as well as puniſhing unnatural Crimes: Which temporal Puniſhments will never do; as is certain by woful Experience: Nor will the Fear even of eternal Puniſhments prevent all Crimes in ſuch harden'd Conſciences as Freethinkers. However the Fear of eternal Puniſhment is infinitely more medicinal, more efficacious to prevent, and deter

deter Men from Sin, than what is merely temporal. What Millions of Crimes would wicked and artful Men commit, if Eternity did not keep them in Awe? But there is a ſtronger Conſideration than all this, grounded in the very intrinſick Nature of the Thing, *viz.* That it is to be feared, that Numbers of wicked Men breathe their laſt in a confirmed Hatred of their God; curſing and blaſpheming him in their Hearts: Which diabolical Diſpoſition is likely to laſt, as long as their immortal Soul ſhall laſt: And by Conſequence juſtly puniſhable, for an immortal Duration. In ſhort, as long as the invincible Proofs for the Chriſtian Religion ſhall laſt, ſo long ſhall the Puniſhments of the Wicked laſt; in ſpite of all this Maſquerade Author can ſay to the contrary.

Fr. But, at the laſt Day, when this World will be no more; that Puniſhment will be no more *Medicinal*, but Revenge; which is unworthy of God.

Gal. There's your Miſtake again: 'Tis chiefly medicinal, becauſe eternal. You ſee, temporal Puniſhment has frequently no internal Effect upon ſuch a harden'd Race as our modern Infidels. What Crimes might be committed with Impunity, particularly by Sinners of the firſt Magnitude, if there were no interior *Guilt*, and Puniſhment due to it, to check them in their Enormities: If *Guilt*, there-

therefore punishable by a just God: Not in this Life; therefore in the next. Now as that black Guilt remains in their immortal Souls, 'tis punishable immortally; their Worm will never die, as God has told them, who never tells a Lye; therefore beware: Besides, this Masquerade Author pretends to believe the Scripture; and does not *Christ* tell him directly, that the Wicked, at the *last Day*, shall be placed on his Left-Hand with the filthy Goats, and shall be cast into *Fire everlasting*; therefore that Author cuts upon himself directly, when he denies eternal Punishments.

Fr. Well, I grant, that Author must acknowledge that God can punish Sin; and after Death too: And even eternally; and it must be foolish, as well as impious, to prescribe to an All-wise, All-just God, how long, or how grievously Sin is to be punished: But he comes off by saying, that *Christ* has suffered the Punishment for Man, and obtained *Redemption* for him.

Gal. He comes off, how? from one Absurdity, by falling into another. But don't deceive yourself by such vain Hopes. *Christ* has certainly provided a *Redemption* for all Men, if they will but make use of the Means and Conditions to apply it; if they will live soberly, justly, and piously in this Life; but not for harden'd impious Wretches, who often die cursing and blaspheming that blessed Re-

Redemption *Christ* has paid for them. Can such an impious Notion be rational? But, as this wretched Author professes himself a Christian, though I fear under a Mask; *Christ* says directly, as was observed before, that at the *last Day*, the Goats, *i. e.* the Wicked, shall be placed on his left Hand, and he shall say to them, *Go ye Cursed* into Fire everlasting, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, *&c.* Will he call that *a Redemption* for all Men? So that if this Author were a Christian, he cuts upon the very Principles of the Gospel; if not, he is an impious Impostor. Hence also his Distinction between the Grace of *Redemption*, and the Grace of *Super-abundance*, which he repeats *ad nauseum*, is as ridiculous as the rest. Is to *go Cursed* into Fire everlasting a *Grace*? Undoubtedly there is a Grace of *Super-abundance*; as one Star shall outshine another in Brightness: But not in his impious Notion. So I leave him.

Fr. Hold a little; what do you say to his Notions of Antichrist? There I think he triumphs.

Gal. More ridiculously than in all the rest: Though it is a Rock wiser Heads than his have split upon: He makes Antichrist a mere Phantom in the Air, that never did, nor ever will exist, unless in his Noddle: whereas Antichrist is to be a real Person; a Head of the Wicked, opposite to *Christ* at the last Period of the World; as the Scripture says expressly;

yet

yet this Author would make us believe, that Antichrist is only the *old Man*, *the Man* or *Body of Sin*; the Corruption of Nature, which is in every Man, warring against the Spirit; which no where exists separately from the *new Man*, any more than Sin exists separately from the Sinner. Now if this old Man should be *damned eternally*, as he holds Antichrist will, what will become of the *new Man*? Don't wicked Men die full of the *old Man*, and the *Man of Sin* is in full Possession of them? nay, there are Numbers, that never knew any thing of the *new Man*; yet our Masquerader says directly that the old Man will be damned eternally, Is that *old Man* an *individuum vagum*? a Phantom existing in the Air? Will not real Men in whom that old Man is united, be damned as well as the old Man? Is that to partake of the *Redemption of Christ*? Such Heaps of Nonsense and Contradictions never were raked up in one Bundle before; yet capable of imposing upon the Unwary; so I leave them to be consumed with his *old Man*.

Fr. You take no notice of his hectoring about the few that will be saved, *&c.*

Gal. There is no Necessity of following him through all his Follies: He must be a very Self-sufficient Fool who pretends to determine the Number of the *Elect*. 'Tis certain Men are to work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling. I have shewn his Ab-

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ſurdities and Inconſiſtences in the main Points of that impious Libel. The Man particularly belongs to my Office: He that believes that the moſt flagitious Wretches will be ſaved, has nothing but the Galllows to keep him in awe. But don't deceive yourſelf by imagining that God neither regards the free Actions of Men, or will puniſh them. 'Tis fact he has puniſhed Sin for ſo many thouſand Years, and will certainly puniſh it after Death; that he does and will concern himſelf about the Actions of Men, is as clear alſo as that there is a Providence over the World, and he that denies a Providence over the World, both as to the Moral and Phyſical Part of it, is ſomething worſe than a Fool. The free Actions of Men are the moſt noble Part of it. Why was it worth his while to make you a Rational Creature? Why has he taken Pains, if the Expreſſion may be allow'd, to make the leaſt Inſect with infinite Art and Knowledge? He is neither better or worſe for your being, or not being at all; yet he thought it worth his while to make you a Rational Creature, and will think it worth his while to ſee that you live according to the eternal Dictates of Reaſon, or loſe his Favour. Is this an Argument to lay the Streſs of eternal Conſequences on? No, this is worſe than leaving all to Chance.

Fr. You take me wrong; we allow another Uſe of Reaſon beſide taking Care of the Body:

Body: 'Tis to form noble Designs, to project glorious Schemes which grasp at the Government of the whole World, to——

Gal. I know what you would say: That is, to raise and aggrandize yourselves, that you may have no Body to controul you in your darling Passions. There's the Center of all: This only shews, that a *Freethinker* is a Brute of a more elevated Capacity. No, Sir; your Reason was given for more noble Ends than all this: *i. e.* to know and adore the Omnipotent Creator of the Universe, whose Existence you can't deny if you would, since I believe no *Freethinker* was ever so mad as to say he could make himself. If no one single Effect in the Universe could be produced without a distinct Cause, how could a Collection of them be produc'd without such a Cause? If you are the Handy-work of this adorable Cause of all Things, you are to be subordinate to him; to pay him his due Homage, whose inherent Right it is to command you: To square your Life according to the Dictates of his perfect Reason, a share of which he has bestowed upon ye: Can ye imagine that the Crimes and Abominations authorized by your No-Principles, can ever be agreeable to the most just and perfect Reason in God? Since you won't strive to open your Eyes to these divine Truths, let me endeavour to open them for you. I have done it for a great many of your Pro-

ſeſſion, who have died in my Arms. When they come hither, they have infinitely better Lights than they had before. They have acknowledged the grand Miſtake they were in, both as to Theory and Practice: Then their Reaſon ſhewed them the wrong Steps they had taken: When my Officers and Attendants had tyed down their Hands from ſhooting and ſtabbing themſelves; the Miſts and Clouds of their irregular Appetites clear'd up, and ſhew'd them quite a different Proſpect from what they had before. If you'll give me leave, I'll ſhew you part of this Proſpect. What ſay you? You are in the ſame Path as to the Theory, that has led ſo many to this Place. Shall I ſhew you what their interior Sentiments were, when they came to the right Uſe of Reaſon at that laſt Hour?

Fr. I don't care if you do for once: Tho' 'tis contrary to our Rules to ruffle our Repoſe with ſuch melancholy Subjects.

Gal. Oh! The vain Joys of the wicked always drag a dreadful Clog after them; witneſs the violent Remedies you are forced to uſe to take it off. Well then; I'll tell ye what Ideas ſeveral of your Profeſſion have had, when they came to make their Exit at this Place. Some of them indeed deſtroyed their Reaſon with Opium or Brandy, or ſome other intoxicating Drug, that, as they lived, they might die without Thought; which is a pro-

a prodigious Encomium for a Rational Creature. But I have peep'd into the Souls of ſeveral of them a little before their Death, and ſaw the whole Syſtem of their former Ideas quite changed in a Trice. All their inhuman and beaſtly Actions look'd like ſo many hideous Monſters, ſtaring them in the Face with the moſt ghaſtly Deformity. A certain Divine *Ray*, ſhew'd them the Certainty of an All-ſeeing, Supreme Deity, the Firſt Cauſe and Author of all Things, Infinite in all Perfections, on whom they depended for every Breath they drew: Their Reaſon demonſtrated to them, they could not make themſelves; yet found, they were endowed with Powers and Perfections quite above all that was mere Matter. This ſhew'd them the Obligation of Adoring, Praiſing, Worſhipping and Obeying this Infinite Supreme Being; the Gratitude and Acknowledgments due to him for all his Benefits; with that indiſpenſable Subordination, by which all Creatures are rang'd in Obedience to his Holy Will; and which make up the chief Acts of Natural Religion. They ſaw that to do this was *Good*; or what was according to the very Notion and Nature of a Rational Being. On the other hand, not to be grateful and Subordinate to him, was *Evil*, or contrary to the Nature of Right Reaſon. Here they were convinced of their grand Miſtake in making a Jeſt of Religion, and

and denying any thing to be Evil: Then they compared their own Reaſon, and the Powers of their Soul, with the ſupreme Reaſon and All-Juſt Will in this infinitely perfect Being, and found that his Divine Reaſon and Will ought to be the Model of theirs. That to conform to the Supreme Reaſon, muſt be Right or Good; to deviate from it, muſt be Wrong or Evil. By this Rule they examined the Tenour of their paſt Actions, and conſider'd whether their Murders, Extortions, inceſtuous and beaſtly Whoredoms, were agreeable to the moſt Juſt and Perfect Reaſon in God: Or whether a Being infinitely Rational, Juſt and Good, both in himſelf, and with reſpect to all his Creatures, could ever authorize or approve the Cruelties and Barbarities committed by Men: This they ſaw was impoſſible, and inconſiſtent with the Nature of God; and by conſequence, muſt be Odious in his ſight: And if the Supreme Reaſon be the Rule and Model of Reaſon in Man; it muſt be irrational and unnatural in Man to commit them. Hence alſo they ſaw that there muſt be eternal Truths in the Duties of Life, as well as in Science and Knowledge: For which Duties Men ſtand accountable to the Supreme Being and Ruler of the Univerſe; who muſt ſee, and take down in his Eternal Records, all that

paſſes

passes under his Government. That to act contrary to these eternal Truths, must be to break in upon indispensable Duties; and by consequence Evil; and to conform to them must be Good: from whence it follows, that there must be a Morality in the Actions of Men to keep them in these Duties. That the Life of Man consisting in what he owes to God, his Neighbour, and himself, there must be eternal Duties in these three Respects: That it behoves all Men to consider what these Duties are, and to observe them faithfully; as they are accountable to the universal Ruler. Who, as he made all Things with wonderful Art; nor thinks the least Insect beneath his Cognizance; with much more Reason does his providential Care extend itself to the more noble Actions of rational Creatures; assigning them Rules, by which they are to guide the chief Part of their Lives. That the safest Way to know what these Duties are, must be the Revelation of them by God himself, one of the most desirable Things that can be wish'd for in this Life. That in fine, no rational Man can desire stronger Proofs that God has revealed his Will to Men, than the irrefragable Testimonies for the Christian Religion. Thus Reason and Nature shew'd them there was something Good to be done, and Evil to be avoided; and God himself, that they might not be deceiv'd, had reveal'd to them

the Particulars of their Duty in the Institution of Christianity, wherein are shewn such Marks of the Finger of God; as well as making Men become more Rational, as they become Christians. By these Considerations they saw the Enormities of their past Life, acknowledging their Faults, and returning to the Supreme Creator of their Being, they made their Exit much more like rational Creatures, than the rest of your Clan generally do by a Shot, or a Stab; butchering themselves like inhuman Monsters, or drowning the noble Light of Reason at their last Hour, which should be their distinguishing Prerogative from Brute Beasts.

This is a short Sketch of the just Laws of Nature, which every thinking Man might see, if he were not blinded with Prejudices of lawless Passions. Prejudices much stronger than all the Arts of Priestcraft. Since People are more inclined to lean towards Liberty, than to curb their unruly Appetites: And I am afraid, after all your Clamour and Noise of Prejudice and Priestcraft, the greatest Sham and Imposture lies on the Side of the *Freethinkers*; since these publickly profess, that 'tis no Sin to cheat and impose on all the World.

However, I leave it to your serious Consideration, if a Freethinker can be serious, whether I have not put you on a more just and natural Way of thinking, and more agreeable to the Rays of that Divine Light given

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us by the Omnipotent Creator, than to maintain that the most horrid Crimes can ever be agreeable to right Reason either in God or Man?

Fr. I confess you have plac'd Matters in a much clearer Light than ever I saw before. But the Cheats and Wickedness of the World, in the most sanctified Callings, would almost make a Man believe, Religion were a Jest: 'Tis certainly so in the Opinion of these People. Besides, some of the Mysteries of Christianity are a little hard to digest: Tho' I own, all our Drift is to free ourselves from all Obligations of Duty and Conscience whatsoever.

Gal. I thought to have taken my Leave of you here. But I must say a Word or two to these Objections of yours. As for wicked Persons, there have been, and will be such to the End of the World: But, if some People put out their own Eyes, must every one do so? The Question is not, whether Men mayn't act against the Light of Nature, but whether they ought not to do so. If the Crimes of Men are evidently contrary to the just Rules of the Supreme Reason in God, they must be so with respect to Man: Wherefore every rational Creature ought to conform himself to the Laws of Nature; being assured that there are essential Differences of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong; whose Boundaries are never to be pass'd, without incurring

the Displeasure of the All-just Ruler of the Universe; who must be Equitable and Impartial to all his Creatures, unless they render themselves unworthy of his Regard to their Impieties. And not only this; But since there is such an evident Inequality of Goods and Evils of this Life; the Wicked generally prospering, and the Righteous being oppress'd: 'Tis no less evident that his impartial Justice has reserv'd a Power of making a just Computation in the next. On which account it behoves you to take Care; for there is more to come after than you are aware of.

As for Mysteries in Religion: Pray what is there in Nature that is not so? Is not your proud Reason gravel'd in the Production of the least Insect? And yet you cry out against Mysteries in Religion! Then what must we say of the adorable Works of the whole Creation? You pretend to acknowledge the Existence of God: Yet, is not his whole Essence incomprehensible? Can you pretend to scan his Infinity, Eternity, Immensity, or any one of his Attributes? This we are sure of, that *He is*; and is infinitely more perfect than we can comprehend: Yet you deny the Mysteries of Christianity, because they are incomprehensible! No, learn first to know what passes on Earth, before you censure Heaven. You will find contradictory Systems even in your own *dear Matter*;

yet

yet you are not for Myſteries in Religion! Our Reaſon tells us, unleſs you make that a Jeſt, as well as Religion, which your No-Principles wou'd almoſt make us believe, that what belongs to the Nature of God, muſt be incomprehenſible; nay, further, That none can give us ſo juſt Notions of what belongs to him, as he himſelf. But that he has ſufficiently reveal'd his Myſteries to Men, you may eaſily ſee in the Proofs for the Chriſtian Religion: Proofs that are uſher'd in by the beſt atteſted Facts in the World.

Laſtly, If you ſhould wonder how an inanimate Being, as I am, can ſpeak and argue thus with ye; I muſt tell you, that the whole Voice of Nature is againſt you, and the leaſt *Atom* ſufficient to confute ye. Few Words are beſt; take this as a providential Warning, leſt *ſerious Thinkers* ſhould think it as lawful to tye you up from your Meat, as you do to cut *their* Throats. But I will give you a Reprieve for once. However, if you go on in this Way of Thinking, Numbers of you will certainly die in my Arms, without *Redemption*, either in this World or the next, in ſpight of all your Anomymous Author flatters you with, of *Heaven being open to all Men.* So fare you well.

F I N I S.

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